# Recovery from Sickness.



# SERMON

Preach'd at Leake in Nottinghamshire, November the Second, 1729.

By MICHAEL STANHOPE, D.D.

Offerte Deo acceptissimum Munus, incorruptam Fidem, et virtutem Mentis incolumem, laudem devotionis illustrem.--- S. Cypr. de Exhort. Mart.

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TO

# John Woodhouse, M. D.

SIR,



FTER I had confented to Publish this Discourse for the Benefit of my Parish, I shou'd have thought my

Self unpardonable, had I not, in this Manner acknowledg'd your Care of me in my late Illness, and that, under God, my Recovery is owing to you.

SEVERAL Times I took Notice of your Fervent Ejaculations, for a Blessing upon the Means you made use of, and as I then receiv'd Comfort from your kind Concern for me, I now speak of it to your Praise.

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#### DEDICATION.

THE Confidence our Country reposes in you is well known by the Number of your Patients, your thorough Knowledge of every Part of Physick by your Success, and your Humanity to the Sick by your unwearied Carefulness.

As, Sir, I abhor Flattery, so I am under no apprehension of being accus'd of it:—I only fear I shall be Censur'd for not having done perfect Justice to your Merit, and am,

Leake, Christmas- Your most Obliged,

bumble Servant,

M. Stanhope.

PSALM



### PSALM XXX. 3, 4.

O Lord, Thou hast brought up my Soul from the Grave: Thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down into the Pit.

Sing unto the Lord, O ye Saints of his, and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his Holiness.



having out of Mercy and Goodness lately visited me with Sickness nigh unto Death, and having been graciously pleased to spare

my Life, and restore me to Health; I thought I could not meditate upon a more B improving

Illness than this I am now upon. God was my Deliverer, and to him is the Praise due: He has healed, he has smitten, he has revived me, and I live in his Sight. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name Bless. the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits: for he has delivered my Soul from Death, my Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling.—

In the first Place I observe from the Text, that Life and Death are in the Hands of Almighty God. Thou hast brought up my Soul from the Grave: Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down into the Pit.—

In the next, That Recovery from Sicknefs, is so great a Blessing and Mercy, we can never enough acknowledge the lovingkindness of our God.—

In the last Place; that those Persons who have been brought up from the Grave by the Power of God, should not only ofer up their Praises and Thanksgivings
them-

themselves, but should exhort others to do so too.—Sing unto the Lord, O ye Saints of his, and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his Holiness.—

First then in pursuance of my proposed Method.—Life and Death are in the Hands of Almighty God.—

It is most certain from Divine Revelation, that God's Care extends itself to the poorest, meanest Man upon Earth, as well as the Man who slows in Riches, Plenty and Honour; and tho' Titles make a difference between his Creatures, the Work of his Hand, in this Life, yet before him all Flesh is Grass. 'Tis in God we live and move and have our Being.

We should be independent of him, if we could act without the Author of our Nature, and preserve our selves. It was God who united our Souls and Bodies; and this Incomprehensible Union would immediately be dissolved, if his good Providence did not maintain it. He is, as holy David says, the Strength of our Life. God is the first Cause of all Things, and

all fecond Causes are ordered and directed by his Wisdom and Power. Our whole Being and the Preservation of it depends upon God.—

It is his glorious Sun that ripens for us the Staff of Life; 'tis his Hand that opens the Windows of Heaven, and poureth down Rain to refresh the Earth, and to feed the Beasts for the Service of Men. It is this Sun that is the Life of our World, and without whose enlivening Beams all Motion, Animal and Vital, would cease, and nothing would be lest but Death and Darkness.—

THE Moon by her Motion helps us to divide our Time, regulates, if she doth not procure, the Ebbing and Flowing of the Sea, by which the Sea and Rivers are kept Sweet and preserved from Stench, and so rendered in every respect more useful for Trade and Navigation. Nothing in the Heavens shews Chance, but clearly and sully demonstrates that all Things depend upon, and are governed by an Infinite Understanding and a boundless Goodness. The Heavens

Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work.—

It is his Earth that supports us; his Air in which we breathe; his Winds that purify it to keep us in Health.—

IT was this great God that first breathed into us the Breath of Life. God, who, with inimitable Art, formed us in the Womb. 'Twas by his Care and All-seeing Eye, that the Knees did not prevent us, and that we were not strangled 'Twas his Goodness that in our Birth. faved us from those Dangers which we. in the Morning of Life, were as little able to provide against, as we were to know them; and which Dangers, without his watchful Providence, would have closed our Eyes as soon as we beheld the Light, and would have taken us into the World of Spirits, almost as foon as we entered into this. 'Twas his preventing Grace that delivered us from the Perils and Dangers of unthinking Infancy, and the unfeared Evils of heedless Youth. It is God that holds our Souls and Life, and suffereth not our Feet to Sip .-God's God's Stores they are, which repair the Decays of Nature, and they are his also, which he, with unerring Wisdom, shares and divides amongst us for our Refreshment, Comfort and Delight. His Corn, his Wine and Oyl .- Wine that maketh glad the Heart of Man; Oyl that makes his Face to shine; and Bread which strengthens Man's Heart. It is God that makes the Things we eat and drink for the Support of Life, to nourish us; and we should always have so just a Sense of his Caring for us, as to beg his Bleffing before we eat, and return Thanks afterwards.

WHEN God withdraws his most common Blessings, we droop, we languish, we die.—Diseases of all kinds stand in readiness, waiting for his Commands; and when our Sins provoke him to Anger, they seize us with mighty Violence, and in a few painful, restless Days and Nights, our Pride is humbled, our Purposes are disappointed, Honour and Glory vanish away, and we are gone.—There is a Time to be born, and a Time to die, but God in Wisdom conceals it.—Future Events are hid

hid from us, that we may perform our present Duty, and mind the one thing needful. God shews that Life and Death are in his Hands, by appointing the different Times of Death. Some are taken away and die in Childhood, others in the Bloom and Gaiety of Youth, and others weather out the Storms of Misfortunes and Sickness, and live to a great old Age. We read indeed that God has fet us our Bounds that we cannot pass; but this Scripture-Expression doth by no Means make him the Cause of either violent, sudden, or untimely Death: For we are also assured, that bloody and deceitful Men shall not live out half their Days; that is, according to the general Order and Appointment as to the Age of Man, to which, if they had not been bloody, deceitful and wicked, they might have lived; but it is in every Man's own Power to cut the Thread of Life, by not walking in the Ways of God, by Intemperance and Debauchery .-

WHATI have faid on this Head being feriously meditated upon, would convince all my People who now hear me, and

and every one who would weigh such Arguments, that God governs the World, that Life and Death are in his Hands, and that he extends his Care to the least and most contemptible Part of the Creation. If, I say, we think Justly on these Things, we must acknowledge this great Being to be most wise, most knowing, and most powerful. God's Eyes run too and fro, to shew himself strong in the behalf of those, whose Heart is upright towards him; which Consideration should put us upon praying both in Sickness and in Health, Lord, save us, or else we perish.—

I proceed to shew that Recovery from Sickness is so great a Blessing and Mercy, we can never enough acknowledge the loving-kindness of our God.—Thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down into the Pit.—

HEALTH is the Soul that animates and fweetens all the Pleasures of Life: Without it they cease to be so, and become tasteless and insipid.—

Strength. By them Youth loses Vigour, and Sprightliness; Beauty all Charms; and Conversation is made disagreeable: But if Diseases are acute, and attended with imminent Dangers, they level all Conditions; and the greatest Monarch is no more favoured by a Fit of the Stone, than the poorest of his Subjects. Both are treated alike, and put upon the Rack.—Riches themselves at such a Time of exquisite Torture, are no further serviceable than to procure for us, such Things, as in the Time of Health would sour every Enjoyment.—

To find any Pleasure in the greatest Advantages of Honour and Fortune, a Man must enjoy the Blessing of Health; and its as great a Truth, that Riches of themselves will not purchase it, tho, by being ill used, they often destroy Health, and breed Diseases to the Destruction of the Owners thereof. A Man given up wholy to Pleasure runs off Life a-pace; and an ingenious Writer compares such a one to the blowing of a Fire too often, which

" less."—

MEN in a perfect flate of Health and Vigour, are apt to imagine themselves at a great distance from Death, (though they know not how near it may be) and too frequently make a flight Matter of it; but upon its approach, the bravest Man fears and trembles. The Belief and awful Sense of Futurity, will strike Terrour into the greatest Hero. Death will damp his Spirits, and mingle Bitterness with his most Juscious Pleasures. Death is not less to be feared because it may be afar off, being it is fooner or later unavoidable, and may come at a Time when we are very unfit to appear before the Presence of God; and therefore we should live the Life of the Righteous, that our End may be like his and our Hope at the Hour of Death may be full of Glory. It cannot but occasion great disturbance in the Mind, to think that the Time may be near when the Soul and Body, those dear Friends, must be parted. Even St. Paul, (though he had fo great a defire after Immortality) reckoned it a Bleffing for a good Man to be kept alive.

alive. He says of Epaphroditus, that be was Sick nigh unto Death, but God had Mercy on him. We find the holy Men of old earnest to live long. Return, O Lord, deliver my Soul; O fave me for thy Mercies sake. In Death there is no Remembrance of Thee; in the Grave who shall give Thee Thanks? O my God, take me not away in the midst of my Age. Oh spare me, that I may recover Strength before I go hence and be no more .-

THE next Reason I shall give why Health and Recovery from Sickness is so great a Bleffing and Mercy, is, our having a longer Time given us to prepare our selves for the Judgment of the Great Day. It is appointed for all Men once to die, and after that the Judgment .-

ALMIGHTY God's granting us a longer Day is a great Mercy, because it enables us to recollect what Evil we have done, that we may Repent, and what Good, in hopes of being made meet, (thro' the Blood of Christ) to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. This Life is our only Time of Tryal; and

according to our Behaviour, our Hope entirely depends. There is no Knowledge nor Invention in the Grave; therefore it is absolutely necessary whilst we live, not only to have Oyl in our Lamps, but to take Care also that they be burning; not only to have the Graces of the Holy Ghost, but to have them in the fullest Strength fallible Man can attain to in this sinful World.—

THE best Men can never so much warm their Hearts with the Love of God, but that they may more and more purify them by a holier Flame. What manner of Persons then ought we to be in all Godliness, who must one Day go into Eternity? How fould we labour to increase with all the Increase of God? What need have we of the compleat Armour of Righteousness to conquer the various and (in Health) the unknown Difficulties of a dying Hour? How should we labour to be rich in good Works, that we may have the comfortable Hope before we depart this Life, that our Saviour will not fay, I know you not, but will pronounce this joyful Sentence---

Come,

Come, ye bleffed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you?---

We who have been nigh unto Death, know how unfit a Time Sickness is to begin a Holy Life, and how improper a Season to repair the Disorders of an ill one. Let us then walk while it is Light, lest Darkness come upon us; for when the Night comes, it is too late, no Man can work.---

We cannot be over Careful in a Concern of such vast Importance. Our Souls, and our Eternity depend upon our Conduct. We must make the Word of God our only Guide, and the only Rule of our Faith and Actions. And it is a Mercy which cannot sufficiently be acknowledged, that God has allowed farther Time to be acquainted with that Gospel which has brought Life and Immortality to Light, and with that Eternal, Blessed Saviour, who suffered for the greatest Sinners, rose again for our Justification, and is now in Heaven making Intercession for us.....

He is the most happy Man, who in the sincere Performance of the Duties of Religion, can resign his Soul to that Saviour upon the Bed of Sickness, and in the Hour of Death. He is the most rational Man who trusts to, and wholly relies upon God's Promises and his Son's Merits, without having the least Regard for the unconditional Pardon of a Priest, or placing any Considence in the pretended Power of the Keys.—God alone can forgive Sins, and He will abundantly Pardon.—

AFTER our departure we shall instantly know more than all the most learned Men in their critical Inquiries ever knew by hard Study during the Course of their Lives, and then it will appear that pure Religion, --- Christ's Religion, lies in a little compass. To understand, to will, and remember perfectly, is the Essence of the Soul, and so it is represented under the Parable of Dives and Lazarus. So long as it is united to the Body, it sees and perceives Things by the Organs of the Senfes, and reasons upon the Images that are labour'd in the Imagination; but there are Ideas in the Soul purely Intellectual, and which which have nothing Material in them. We can have no Idea of a separated Soul, but that it is all Thought,---all Spirit.---

Let us then learn to value our Souls more, since in respect of Excellency there is so wide a difference between them and our Eodies. The better Part demands our chief Care, and we are forbid to bestow all our Time in making Provision for the Fiesh to fulfill the Lusts thereof.---

I shall mention only one Reason more among a great many I could offer to you, why Recovery from Sickness is so great a Blessing and Mercy.....

IT gives us an Opportunity of doing much good to others.---

It is a most desirable Thing to live when we can obtain the Ends that are truly Great and Noble. We may teach the ignorant and foolish who know not God, and we may advance the Power of Religion, by letting our Light shine before Men.---

Our Lives are not our own, but, by the Title of Creation and Redemption, they are God's; and every Man is (if possible) more obliged to dedicate Life to his Service, when, by Recovery from Sickness, God has given a new one. We ought to teach and make Transgressors sensible how dreadful a thing it is to fall into the Hands of the living God....

We can tell the Healthful what Sickness is by Experience; how it deprives us of our fondest Pleasures and refreshing Rest; and while we are afflicted with it, we are even willing to part with our beloved Bodies. We may assure the Healthful that, at such a Time, Pleasures and Conversation are tasteless and tiresome. We may advise the Healthful to provide for the numberless Misseries and Missortunes, which attend Life;—many of which will overtake them before they die.—

We can tell the Sick of the Goodness and Sovereignty of God. We can assure them they can never be so distressed, but he can help them. His Power can relieve them, when the Physicians cannot.---

FAITH

FAITH in Christ cured the Woman of an Issue of Blood, when her Physicians, by their Art and Medicines could do nothing; nay, we read, she had suffered many things by them, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse: But so great was her Faith, that a touch only of the Garment of the heavenly Physician, the Son of God. ( who healed all manner of Diseases) made her whole. Christ faid unto her, thy Faith has made thee whole; go in Peace, and be whole of thy Plague. Christ has the same Charity for us, and the same Power, the same All-sufficient Fulness to heal us, when, with fervent Prayer, we call upon him. The Prayer of Faith shall save the Sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. I mean only by this, that we ought not to put too much trust in Medicine; but we ought to fix our Confidence upon the Goodness of an All-powerful God, who, though he has given us Medicines to heal our Sickness, yet, without his Bleffing upon them, they will not cure us. The same Power which gave Virtues and Medicinal Qualities to Things, can as easily take them away, or prevent their having any healing Effect upon such as do not look up to God for a Bleffing. With-

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out that, the Intention of the Physician will not be answered; the Means he makes use of will be unsuccessful. It is happy to have a learned and friendly Physician, because, as the wife Man has observed, a learned, faithful Friend is the Medicine of Life, and that he who fears the Lord shall find him.—

RECOVERY from Sickness is a great Bleffing and Mercy, because we have a fresh Opportunity to feed the Hungry; to cloath the Naked; to visit the Sick, and to put on the Miseries and Wants of others, after the great Example of our Saviour. What a Mercy it is to have further Time allowed us to perform so many laudable, Praiseworthy Works as these? What a Mercy to the good Shepherd, that he may live to speak in the Name of God; to rebuke Vice boldly, and (upon Repentance) to bring glad Tidings of Salvation to the greatest Sinner; to unfold the Mysteries of the Gospel, and the unsearchable Riches of his Grace to be found there? What a Mercy and Bleffing it is, for a Parent to live to see his Children brought up, and educated in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; to instill into them betimes

betimes Principles of Vertue and true Honour; to acquaint them early with the
Ways of God, and by Exhortations and
Prayers, recommend them to the Care
of Providence, and fortify them against the
Rashness and Folly of their green Age.---

Tis a generous Thing to pray for long Life, when we have no other Pleasure or Views in the enjoyment of it, than that it gives us an Opportunity to be serviceable to our Country, to the Church, to our Families, to our Friends; and, in short, (as much as we can be) to all the World. In doing good, we imitate the Excellency of the Divine Nature, which is all Goodness. God is good. and doeth good; his bleffed Son went about doing good, and the boly Angels are miniftring Spirits for the good of others .- This is truly laying up for our selves a good Treasure against the Time to come, that we may lay hold on Eternal Life. Good Works are the Bags that wax not old: They are the Treasures in Heaven that fail not .---

Tis admirable Advice of the Son of Sirach,--- Lay up thy Treasure according to the Commandment of the most High, and D 2

it shall bring thee more Profit than Gold. Shut up thy Alms in thy Store-house, and it shall deliver thee from all Affliction : It shall fight for thee against thy Enemies, better than a mighty Shield and strong Spear .--- That also of the Royal Preacher ---Cast thy Bread upon the Waters, for thou shall find it after many Days; which Figurative Expression implies a Liberality even to Profusenes; it implies a generous distribution without the least prospect of any return, and it agrees with one of the diftinguishing Marks of true Charity .--- Charity feeketh not her own; and although the wretched Miser dares not take the Veracity of God for his Security, that the Bread thus cast upon the Waters shall be found again; yet, the good Christian will saw plentifully in this kind, that after many Days here, or however in a better World, he may reap a plentiful Harvest, and be recompensed with the Joys of Eternity .--- If we, in this manner, conduct our selves through the Changes and Chances of this mortal Life, we shall not be like the wicked in their Deaths, but shall be found of our Lord in Peace ....

I am now to shew in the last Place, that those Persons who have been brought up from the Grave, by the Power of God, should not only offer up their Praises and Thanksgiving themselves, but should exhort others to do so too. Sing unto the Lord, O ye Saints, and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his Holiness.---

How great soever any Blessing may be, and how valuable soever the Benefits obtained by it, yet no Enjoyment can come up to this Consideration,—this pleasing, comfortable Assurance that God bestowed it upon us, and that the Lord delighted to do us good.—'Tis God alone whom (properly speaking) we can look upon as our own peculiar Good. This Resection is sufficient to make us rejoice and be exceeding glad, to break forth into Joy, to be glad with all the Heart, with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.—

THE Leper when he saw he was healed, turned back with a loud Voice and glorified God. The Man was so transported and full of Joy, for the Benefit he had received, that he fell down at the Feet of Je-sus

fus, giving him Thanks. He thought he should have been unworthy of it, and done Injury to our Lord's Goodness to bury it in Silence.

7 ESUS asked the poor Man, Were there not Ten cleansed, but where are the Nine ? Our Saviour, by the Question, condemned the Ingratitude of those Lepers; for there were found but one who gave Glory to God. The Samaritan had a Sense of his Deliverance, and with profound Humility acknowledged the Bleffing ;-but may we not compare the greatest Part of Mankind to the unthankful Nine, who are importunate in their Prayers, and loud in their Cries to God in their Diffress; but no sooner have their Prayers been heard, but they almost as soon forget the mighty Mercy? How often in the Bitternels of our Souls, when wasting Sickness had brought us down to the Gates of Death, and our Consciences then distracted us with Despair, did we promise we would never more offend, and yet how quickly. have our Vows and his Loving-kindness flipt out of our Minds !-

ALMIGHTT GOD, 'tis true, expects no other Returns, but Praise and Thanksgiving. The Infinite Persection of his Nature will not admit of any; but he has commanded us to acknowledge those Favours and Mercies we cannot repay. Ingratitude is an infallible Proof of a base Mind. The Ingratitude of Judas aggravated the heinousness of his Treachery. Kindnesses and Favours shewn us by our Fellow-Creatures, Men of Honour will never forget; but they will endeavour to make some Return for them,—at least, they will convince their Benefactors they do not want Inclination.—

Notwithstanding what I have faid, yet in Respect of God, it is not enough that we have only an inward Gratitude;—no, we must publish with the Voice of Thanksgiving, and tell of all his wonderous Works. We must not keep back his Mercy from the great Congregation. We must enter into his Gates with Thanksgiving, and come into his Courts with Praise. We must pay our Vows in the Presence of all his People. O praise God, all ye People, and make the Voice of his Praise

Thanks signify nothing to God; they are in themselves insignificant and worthless; but his Infinite Goodness has stampt a Value upon them, and has been graciously pleased to assure us, he will accept them instead of the great Debt we owe. Praise is a generous Principle, which proposes no End to itself, but to do, as is most proper for a depending Creature towards an Allgood God, and to pay the Tribute of Honour where right Reason directs us. When our Mouths praise God with joyful Lips, then our Souls are satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness.—

THE Praising him publickly for Mercies received, will put others upon thinking on their own in particular, and will greatly encourage them to trust in God. It will put them in Mind how merciful it is in God, that he doth not afflict all his Servants at the same time; that he permits some to be in Health and Ease, that by their Prayers, their seasonable Advice and Help, they may administer to the Wants of those lying under his Hand in great weak-

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ness of Body, and whom he has visited with various Diseases and Troubles of Mind.

How should our Hearts be enslamed with an heavenly Desire, and all our Powers quickened up to a grateful Sense of the Necessity of performing this Duty? Let us consider the multitude and continuance of God's Blessings, and let that Reslection provoke us to Thankfulness. How can we excuse the Non-performance of this Duty, when his Blessings are renewed every Moment? When God is ever opening his Hand, and silling us with Good, to let us see that his unbounded Liberality can outgo our infinite Unthankfulness; for we are not worthy of the least of his Mercies?—

To conclude: After our Recovery from Sickness, we should remember we are only Reprieved for a little Time, and that the Sentence of Death which is past upon all Men, will sooner or later be executed. Let us then Pray, that whenever that Time comes, we may be found in a Temper of Mind agreeable to the Greatness of such an Eternal Change, and may have sinished that Work he has given us to do, before we

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depart this Life, and may be ready to give up our Account with Joy, and to say, Lord, receive my Spirit.

And now, Great God, give us that Wisdom which is from above, that we may give Thanks unto Thee for all Things in the Name of Jesus Christ, and may so pass through Things Temporal, that we finally lose not the Things Eternal. Let us beseech God to sanctify us throughout, that our Souls and Bodies may be preserved Blameless unto the coming of our Lord: To whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, be all Honour and Glory for ever. Amen.



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The following SERMONS by Michael Stanbope, Doctor in Divinity, Rector of Leake, &c.

A Thanksgiving Sermon for the Success of her late Majesty's Councils and Forces, against the Attempt of the Pretender to invade Great-Britain, and for the Victory over the French near Audenarde. Preach'd in the Chapel-Royal, 1708.—

A Society-Sermon, preach'd at the Monthly Lecture in the Parish-Church of St. Clement-Dane, London, 1710.—

A Sermon against the Nonjurors. Preach'd at St. Martin's in the Fields, 1717.

A Sermon before the Honourable House of Commons on the 30th of January, 1723, at St. Margaret's Westminster.—

A Sermon preach'd at the Assizes holden at Nottingham, 1724.

A Sermon preach'd at Leake, 1729 .---

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